



P5 Bridging the fragmented forests



P7 China stages fresh drills around Taiwan



P11 Afif is our future, says Mahmud



B3 Utility bill payments thru' MFS rising



Rescuers search for victims in the mangled remains of a car after a box girder of the under-construction Bus Rapid Transit line-3 fell on it in the capital's Uttara yesterday afternoon. Traffic on the busy road was disrupted for hours after the accident, which claimed five lives. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

5 lives lost to gross neglect

Crane drops heavy girder on car in Uttara; newlyweds lone survivors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The joys of the families of a newlywed couple were wiped out in the blink of an eye as a segment of a box girder fell on a car in the capital's Uttara yesterday, killing five including two children.

It happened at Jasimuddin Road intersection on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway around 4:00pm when a crane toppled while moving the precast concrete segment. The weight apparently was too much for the crane.

The groom's father Rubel Miah, 60, the bride's mother Fahima Begum, 37, aunt Jharna Begum, 26, and two children of Jharna - Janatul, 6, and Zakaria, 4 - died at the scene as more than half the car got crushed, police said, adding that they were from Jamalpur's Islampur upazila.

The newlyweds, Rezaul Karim Hridoy and Riya Moni, were taken to a hospital. Police said their injuries were not critical.

The groom's father Rubel, a businessman,

“This is sheer negligence. There is a serious lacking of safety and traffic management in the project.”

Prof Hadiuzzaman of Buet.

“Traffic should have been stopped at that time. But it was not done, a major failure.”

AKM Manir Hossain Pathan, chief engineer of RHD, one of the project implementing agencies

was driving the car, said Rakib Hossain, a family member.

“Rubel's son got married on Saturday and the family in Kawla area [in Dakhhin Khan] was celebrating.”

The seven people in the car were going to the bride's home in Ashulia, said Mohammad Mohsin, officer-in-charge of Uttara West Police Station.

Dozens of precast girder segments like the one that caused the tragedy have been piled on the highway near Jasimuddin Road intersection.

The crane was lifting the segments from the pile and placing them on a tractor trailer on the busy highway.

Many have asked why traffic was not stopped during the activities and pointed out that this is the fourth serious accident at the BRT construction sites in one and

half years. Prof Hadiuzzaman, director of the Accident Research Institute at Buet, said that not even

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RIGHTS ABUSES

Activists call for free enquiry commission

They meet UN human rights chief

STAR REPORT

Rights activists yesterday urged the visiting UN human rights chief to impress upon the government the need for an independent commission to investigate extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances.

Around 20 rights activists met UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet at a city hotel in the morning, on the second day of her four-day visit.

“This was a strong recommendation. They [activists] stressed that the enquiry commission's investigation should be of international standard,” said one of the activists who attended the meeting.

On her first official visit to Bangladesh, Bachelet arrived in Dhaka on Sunday morning and held meetings with four top ministers.

Her visit is considered significant following the US sanctions on Rab and seven of its former and current top officials over allegations of human rights violations last December.

The government has denied allegations of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings.

Activists have said the situation has improved since then with almost no extrajudicial killings and disappearances.

Yesterday, after the meeting with the rights groups, Bachelet took a flight to Cox's Bazar in the evening to visit the Rohingya camps.

The UN High Commissioner's office tweeted that she had important exchanges with a diverse range of civil society actors in Dhaka.

“Civil society needs the space, and enabling conditions, to play their crucial role in identifying and helping resolve #HumanRights challenges,” she tweeted.

A few of those present at the meeting said they also talked about the situation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the rights of people with disabilities and those belonging to minority communities, and the Digital Security Act (DSA).

The activists told this paper that they also told Bachelet how human rights defenders and journalists face obstacles in doing their jobs, and the politicisation of the judiciary.

“We said [Bangladesh] is now a police state, not a people's state,” said Sanjida Islam Tulee, sister of an opposition official who has been missing since allegedly being abducted by Rab in 2013, reports AFP.

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Nation mourns BANGABANDHU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Mourning Day was observed across the country yesterday by paying homage to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The government and various socio-cultural, political and professional platforms, including Awami League and its associated bodies, organised elaborate programmes to mark his 47th death anniversary.

and the president of Awami League. After placing the wreaths, she stood in solemn silence for some time as a mark profound respect to the Father of the Nation.

A contingent of the armed forces performed a gun salute for the memory of Bangabandhu, the greatest Bangalee of all time.

Leaders of different associated bodies of the Awami League also placed wreaths at the grave.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina sprinkles flower petals on the graves of her family members at the capital's Banani graveyard yesterday. She also offered prayers seeking eternal peace of the departed souls of the martyrs of August 15. PHOTO: BSS

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid respect to the architect of Bangladesh's independence by placing wreaths separately at the portrait of Bangabandhu in front of the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in the capital's Dhanmondi-32, which witnessed a barbaric carnage on August 15, 1975.

The PM then visited the historic residence of the Father of the Nation on Dhanmondi-32, which witnessed a

From Dhanmondi, Hasina went to the Banani graveyard where her mother Bangamata Begum Fazilatun Nesa Mujib, brothers Sheikh Kamal, Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russell, and other martyrs of August 15 were laid to eternal rest.

The premier placed wreaths and spread flower petals on their graves. She also offered prayers seeking eternal peace of the departed souls.

Hasina later travelled to Tungipara, the ancestral home of Bangabandhu in Gopalganj, by an Air Force helicopter and placed wreaths at Bangabandhu's grave twice - as the head of the government

It was a public holiday yesterday. On this day in 1975, the nation's founding father along with most of his family members was assassinated by a cabal of military men.

Meanwhile, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader, also the road transport and bridges minister, said the prime minister was working hard to fulfill the dreams of the Father of the Nation.

The minister was speaking to journalists after paying homage to the martyrs of August 15 at the Banani graveyard in the capital.

Visiting UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet paid respect to the Father of the Nation at the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum.

The UN rights chief placed a wreath at the portrait of Bangabandhu and signed the visitors' book there. She also visited the museum and was briefed by State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahrar Alam.

Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Fire in Old Dhaka again, kills 6

The blaze possibly started from the ground floor restaurant



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six staffers of a restaurant were yesterday burnt to death after a fire broke out at a building that houses an eatery and plastic goods and polythene warehouses in Old Dhaka's Chawkbazar.

A leaky gas connection at the restaurant - Barishal Hotel - located on the ground floor of the four-storey building on Debidas Ghat Lane in the Kamal Bagh area most likely started the fire, according to fire service officials and residents

in the area, who heard a long bang at around 11:45 am.

From there, the fire spread to a shoe factory next door, said Khorshed Alam, who lives in the area. From the shoe factory, the fire travelled to the first floor of the next building, where a packaging factory is located.

Ten firefighting units doused the flames after a two-hour effort.

“There was no fire safety measurement,” Bazlur Rashid, deputy assistant director of Fire Service and Civil Defence, told The

Daily Star.

Firefighters recovered the six charred bodies from the first floor of the building, where they were sleeping after the end of their night shift. Five of the bodies are charred beyond recognition.

According to relatives, six staff of the restaurant were missing after the fire incident. They are: Billal Sarder, 35, of Barishal; Osman Sardar, 25, of Shariatpur; Md Sharif, 15, of Cumilla; Swapan Sarkar, 19, of Habiganj; Rubel Mahmud, 30, of

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“I raised issues of proper elections - how having a free and fair election is not enough unless accountability to the public is ensured. I spoke about the culture of impunity.”

An activist on what s/he said during a meeting with the UN human rights chief

BUSINESS

BSCIC INDUSTRIAL ESTATES
Slow implementation a thorn for investors

STORY ON BI

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